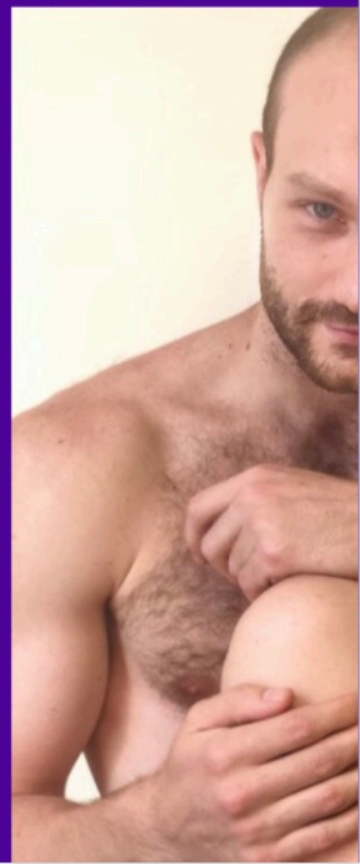




# ...Where You Eat

a new play by  
Dennis Bush





## WHERE YOU EAT

by Dennis Bush

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## Production History

...*Where You Eat* had its World Premiere production at the 2018 Fresh Fruit Festival with direction by Meggy Lykins, stage management by Sari Schein, and the following original cast (in order of appearance):

Rusty	Scot Taylor
Meredith	Kelsey Torstveit
Lisa	Veronica Thompson
Steve	John DiMino
Carole	Melissa Teitel
Dalton	Chapman Hyatt
Kelly	Chrizney Roth
Don	Dan Foster

2018 Fresh Fruit Festival Awards of Distinction:

*Audience Favorite Award*  
*Outstanding Ensemble Award*

## Synopsis

It's not what I was expecting," Rusty says, as he takes an up-close look at a Meredith's vagina, a few minutes after meeting her. As a gay man in his early 20's, Rusty hasn't led a sheltered life, by any means, but his experience with women's private parts has been non-existent. Meredith is happy to let Rusty have a look, but she'd be happier if she could get her toilet to stop moaning so mournfully, when she flushes.

Rusty's sister Lisa's boyfriend is paralyzed from the waist down. And she's just had sex with Steve, who's in a relationship with Kelly, Meredith's best friend. Kelly's co-worker Carole's much-younger boyfriend Don has a history with both Rusty and Lisa. And, then, there's Dalton, who's more comfortable being naked than having a conversation – or being honest with himself or anyone else.

Rusty's search for meaning and, maybe, love takes him and Dalton, Meredith, Don, Carole, Steve, Lisa and Kelly on a pants-dropping, bed-hopping adventure through a world of dildos, deodorant, hummus, Whole Foods, trimmed armpits and cupped balls.

So, wash your hands and hold on tight. In this edgy, adult comedy, filled with witty, memorable dialogue, everything is up for grabs. In the midst of cynicism and sex, there's still room for sweetness and romance...*Where You Eat*.

## About the playwright

Dennis Bush's award-winning plays have been performed in New York and throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere around the world. He has extensive credits as a writer, is a sought-after coach for professional writers and actors, and is a noted script and dialogue consultant in all areas of the entertainment industry, as well. He is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild of America.

# Characters

(in order of appearance)

## **Rusty**

early 20's, comfortable with himself; quirky, sweet

## **Meredith**

20's; Kelly's best friend; sexy, obsessive, a lot of fun at parties

## **Lisa**

mid- to late 20's; in a relationship with a paraplegic man

## **Steve**

mid- to late 20s; in a relationship with Kelly; bartender; likes to sample a variety of flavors

## **Carole**

mid-30's; her much younger boyfriend just moved in with her; confident, brassy; doesn't suffer fools

## **Dalton**

mid- to late 20's; bartender; works with Steve; cocky; sensual and sexual

## **Kelly**

late 20's; female, in a relationship with Steve; works with Carole; knows what she wants and knows what everyone else ought to be doing

## **Don**

early 20's; just moved in with Carole, after dating for a few months

# Setting

Various bedrooms, cafes, bars and other locations. The present.

*Lights up on RUSTY's living room. MEREDITH stands with her back to the audience, wearing nothing but a very short silk robe, which she holds wide open. RUSTY sits on his sofa, leaning forward, staring intently at MEREDITH's vagina.*

RUSTY

It's not what I was expecting.

MEREDITH

You've really never seen one before?

RUSTY

In pictures. But not in person. Not all up close and personal.

MEREDITH

And you just want to look at it?

RUSTY

Exactly. One of my friends was talking about how he slept with like five or six women before he came out. He said it was typical. But I never did. I like to be different, but not *atypical*. That makes it seem like there's something wrong with you. So, I figured that, if I wasn't going to have sex with a woman, I should, at least, have a look at a vagina.

MEREDITH

I'm glad I could help.

*RUSTY moves away from MEREDITH. She closes her robe and sits on the sofa next to him.*

RUSTY

I really appreciate you letting me check it out.

MEREDITH

I don't mind. It's flattering. In a perfect world, I'd be the model for life-like sex dolls.

RUSTY

*(Referring to her vagina)*

It's kind of droopy.

MEREDITH

They all look that way.

RUSTY

Like a sad sea creature?

MEREDITH

Pretty much.

RUSTY

There's so much skin. So many flaps and folds. Like an onion blossom appetizer at Outback.

MEREDITH

That kind of makes me hungry.

RUSTY

It seemed like an awful lot of extra skin. Like vaginas should be circumcised. Like dicks get circumcised.

MEREDITH

There's no comparison. Uncircumcised penises are devious. I don't trust them. They're hiding something. It's like the dick is holding back something. Like it can't ever fully commit to you.

RUSTY

*(Distracted by the images in his head)*

And when a guy is going down on you, it feels nice? It's not like making out with a Basset hound?

MEREDITH

*(Making a joke)*

I don't know. I've never made out with a Basset hound.

RUSTY

But you've gone down on another woman?

MEREDITH

Sure, a few times. *(A beat)* You wanna look at it some more?

RUSTY

No, thanks... It made me kinda depressed. But, I really appreciate you being so... open about it.

MEREDITH

I like showing it off.

RUSTY

I like showing off, too. I like it when guys check me out in the locker room at the gym. I got a hard-on in the steam room, last week, and a really hot guy stared at me and jacked off.

MEREDITH

You wanna show it to *me*? (*Tit for tat*) I showed you mine.

RUSTY

I'll pass. (*An awkward beat*) Can I get you something to drink? (*A laugh*) I'm not sure what the protocol is with somebody who comes to your apartment and shows you her vagina.

*Lights out on RUSTY and MEREDITH, as lights come up on LISA's bedroom. LISA is sitting on top of the bed in panties and an oversized T-shirt. STEVE is in briefs. He's putting on his undershirt and socks, as the scene begins.*

LISA

That was nice (*Pause*) You forget how important legs are.

STEVE

*(Taken aback by her comment)*

What?

LISA

My boyfriend. He *has* legs. He just can't *use* 'em. And having legs that you can use is really important when it comes to sex. Otherwise, I have to do all the work. I don't mind being on top, sometimes, but I don't want that to be the only option. Plus, his dick isn't really reliable. Sometimes, he gets a spontaneous erection that lasts for an hour or two and, other times, he goes limp right in the middle of the action. And he gets defensive about it.

STEVE

Yeah, well...

LISA

*(Cutting him off)*

It's disappointing but, God forbid, I actually appear to be disappointed. No, that would be insensitive. I have to be all, "Oh, it's fine. We can just cuddle." And he knows I'm lying. He knows I don't like to cuddle. I'm more like a guy that way, I guess. I want to have sex and go out for dinner. Or have sex and watch TV. But I definitely don't wanna cuddle.

STEVE

Works for me.

LISA

*(Continuing, as if STEVE hadn't interrupted)*

Especially if the guy came on me. I wanna wash that shit off. With some guys it's like acid the way it burns. It's like what the hell have you been putting into your body that makes that nasty stuff come out?

STEVE

I didn't get any on you, did I? I tried to be careful when I took the condom off.

LISA

No, I wasn't talking about you. Just guys in general. There was this one guy who came in my hair and on my forehead and he wanted to cuddle. He insisted on it. He actually held me down on the bed next to him. And I was laying there worrying that some of his cum was gonna run down into eye and blind me. There's ammonia in semen. You can smell it across the room.

STEVE

I didn't think mine was especially ammonia-y.

LISA

On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most pungent ammonia smell, I'd give yours about an 8.

STEVE

Jesus. I'm sorry.

LISA

No need to be sorry. You didn't get any in my eye. You didn't turn the condom upside down and dump it all over my stomach, either. A lot of guys like to do that. They think it's sexy. *(A quick beat)* It's not.

STEVE

*(Awkwardly trying to change the subject)*

So... your boyfriend...

LISA

Yeah?

STEVE

He's... paralyzed?

LISA

From the waist down.

*STEVE looks down below his waist.*



STEVE

Jesus... Has he always been that way?

LISA

Oh, God, no. If he was paralyzed when I met him, I wouldn't have been interested. I wouldn't have gotten... involved. I mean, it's a lot of work and I didn't sign up to be his home healthcare worker. But that's what I am. The romance goes out of a relationship pretty damn quick when you have to do all the shit that I do. And I'm not just talking about always having to be on top for sex.

STEVE

So, why don't you leave him?

LISA

And be *that* woman? The heartless bitch who walked out on the paralyzed guy? I don't think so.

STEVE

So, he goes out when you have guys over.

LISA

Usually... Though, he's watched a couple times. Kind of kills the mood when he's sitting in the wheelchair crying, while some guy is trying to fuck me.

*STEVE laughs. Then, tries to stifle the rest of the laugh.*

LISA (cont.)

Trust me, it's not funny... But, whatever.

STEVE

*(Still trying unsuccessfully not to laugh)*

I better be getting home.

LISA

You don't want your wife...

STEVE

*(Correcting her, as he gets dressed)*

Girlfriend.

LISA

*(Ignoring his correction, continuing as if uninterrupted)*

Wondering what you've been up to.

STEVE

I got it under control. She's not due back from Seattle for another couple hours.

LISA

You better go.

STEVE

It was nice.

LISA

*(Wistfully, with the beginnings of tears)*

Yeah. It was.

*Lights out on LISA and STEVE, as lights come up on CAROLE at the airport luggage carousel.*

CAROLE

*(On the phone)*

It was going around and around... *(Clarifying)* The luggage carousel. It was going around and around, and everybody's luggage came off – except mine. And my bag had the priority sticker on it, so it should've come out first. Some guy from the airline is looking for it. Apparently, his computer shows that it arrived, but it might have been sent to the wrong carousel or who the hell knows where else. *(Pause)* No, Kelly left. She got her luggage right away, and she left. She didn't even wait to see if my bag arrived. She's not a team player. I told her that at the airport in Seattle, while we were waiting to board the flight, and she got the last upgrade and I was stuck in a goddamn middle seat, between two fat guys with body piercings. *(Quick pause)* No, I'm not fat-shaming them. I'm body-piercing-shaming them. The guy in the aisle seat had pierced nipples. *(Pause; then, explaining)* I could clearly see the outline of the rings through his tank top. A very loose-fitting tank top – you know, *oversized*, like fat people wear. And he kept reaching inside his shirt and tugging on the rings. I guess I was staring. He got a self-satisfied look on his face – very smug – and he told me that he pierced his nipples himself – after buying the supplies and watching some kind of how-to video on the Internet. *(Pause)* That's what he told me. And, given the choice between people learning how to pierce his own nipples or build a bomb, I'd choose the nipple piercing. *(Looking around, impatiently)* I'm going to have to hunt down the baggage guy from the airline and see if he found my bag. *(Quick pause)* Will you still be up, when I get home? *(Quick pause)* Well, I'll just wake you up, then, so you know I'm home safely.

*Lights out on CAROLE, as lights come up on MEREDITH and DALTON at a bar. MEREDITH sips a trendy drink and DALTON takes periodic gulps from a bottle of beer.*

MEREDITH

It was ringing and ringing and ringing and she didn't answer.

DALTON

Maybe her phone was turned off.

MEREDITH

You can tell when the person you're calling has their phone off. You *can*. Because it goes right to voicemail. And when it rings and rings and rings, and *then*, goes to voicemail, the person has just decided not to take your call. They've decided.

DALTON

Or they're busy.

MEREDITH

*(Judgement is rendered)*

They've *decided*.

DALTON

So leave a voicemail.

MEREDITH

*(Hitting her stride)*

If I wanted to leave voicemail, I would have hoped for her phone to be off because, then, it would have gone right to voicemail – because that's what your phone does when you have it turned off! But I called to talk to her and, for me to talk to her, she'd have to answer her fucking phone. *(Irrefutable fact)* When I call, my face pops up on her phone. My picture appears. I have a personalized ring on her phone. She *knows* it's me. So, she had to look at my face and decide not to talk to me. She looked me in the eye and said, "No, Meredith, I don't want to talk to you. I have nothing to say to you and I don't want to hear anything you have to say to me."

DALTON

You're drunk.

MEREDITH

I've only had one drink. But I took two 12-hour non-drowsy decongestant allergy pills. So, I'm feeling very non-drowsy and very decongested. *(Putting her hand on his arm)* Other than you, Kelly was probably my best friend in the world, before she snubbed me by not answering her phone when I called. And I had important things to tell her.

DALTON

So, shouldn't you be having this conversation with her?

MEREDITH

That was the plan, but, then, I showed a guy my vagina and, after that, I called you and you answered.

DALTON

You what?

MEREDITH

I showed a guy my vagina. But I called you about Steve.

DALTON

He was off, tonight.

MEREDITH

He was at the Whole Foods.

DALTON

He doesn't shop there. I don't think he shops at all. I'm pretty sure Kelly does all their shopping.

MEREDITH

He was at the Whole Foods. With his hand on some woman's ass. His whole hand. He wasn't just accidentally brushing against her ass. He had his whole hand on half of her ass in the Whole Foods Market. The left cheek. He had his right hand on her left cheek. And the woman wasn't moving away, like "What the fuck is your hand doing on my ass?" There wasn't even the slightest hint of surprise or displeasure on her face. She *liked* having his hand on her ass. She may have asked him to *put* his hand on her ass. She may have *invited* him to do it. But, even if she had specifically requested that he put his hand on her ass, he should have said, "No. No thank you. I have a girlfriend, and men with girlfriends don't go around putting their hands on other women's asses, even if they're asked. They just don't." And he kept his hand on her ass all the way through the check-out line. Steve wasn't buying anything. He didn't have a cart or a basket.

DALTON

Because Kelly does all their shopping.

MEREDITH

All he had was his hand on her ass. She was the one doing the shopping. A bottle of wine, a box of dog biscuits and three spools of kitchen twine. That's what she bought. That's it. Wine, dog biscuits and kitchen twine. Somebody is having a kinky party. That's all I'm saying.

DALTON

Nothing wrong with a kinky party.

MEREDITH

My point is, you don't walk into the Whole Foods at 6:30 at night and buy that shit unless you're planning a kinky party. I would bet money that there is some role playing going on at her apartment. Somebody is playing doctor or bad dog or getting trussed up like a crown roast. You don't buy wine, dog biscuits and kitchen twine while some guy has his hand on your ass unless you have some kinky plans. And besides that, Steve didn't even acknowledge me. I know he saw me. I saw *him* and I said, "Hello," with my eyes. I wasn't going to shout across the Whole Foods Market, so I said, "Hello," with my

eyes. It's what you do in a situation like that. And he ignored me. He ignored me because he was too busy with his hand on the woman's ass. He looked right at me – right in my eyes as they were saying, "Hello," and he chose to prioritize that woman's ass over me.

*She takes an aggressive, sloppy gulp of her drink.*

MEREDITH (cont.)

And I have always said... I've always told Kelly... that if things didn't work out between her and Steve, I would sleep with him. Just one. Or twice. But only if she was fine with it.

DALTON

*(With a chuckle)*

It's good to have boundaries.

MEREDITH

I don't want to date him. That would be in bad taste, but I'd fuck him. I would fuck him like a stranger in a unisex bathroom at a club. And if there are people watching, then, so be it. It's not like you can keep people out of the bathroom if they have to go, and if they have to go while two people are fucking like strangers in the bathroom, then, what can you do?

*Lights out on MEREDITH and DALTON, as lights come up on KELLY and STEVE's bedroom. STEVE is taking off the clothes he was wearing when he left LISA's apartment. KELLY enters, dragging a piece of luggage.*

KELLY

I walk in the door and you're already taking off your clothes? I can't just flip a switch and be ready for welcome-home sex. I can't.

STEVE

I was gonna take a shower before you got home. I thought you said you were getting in at 10:35.

KELLY

9:35.

STEVE

Are you sure?

KELLY

I'm here aren't I?

STEVE

Right... Welcome back.

*STEVE gives her an awkward kiss without any other physical contact.*

KELLY

That's all you're going to say?

STEVE

I missed you?

KELLY

And?

STEVE

*(Trying to get the right answer)*

I'm glad you're home. *(Sees that that's not the correct response)* And... how was your trip?

KELLY

The guy sitting next to me was reading a porn magazine.

STEVE

I was asking about the trip, not the *flight home* from the trip.

KELLY

The flight home is *part* of the trip. It's the *end* of the trip. And I have no desire to see some woman spread eagle when I'm on a plane. I have no desire to see a woman spread eagle *any* time, but it seemed especially inappropriate at 35,000 feet.

STEVE

*(A non-committal response, merely to indicate that he's paying attention. He knows how to play the game.)*

Hmm.

KELLY

*(Ignoring him; continuing with her story)*

He was ruggedly handsome, in that porn-reading kind of way. Like somebody who started out blue collar but worked his way up to management. No wedding ring. He had a shaved head and a goatee. Kind of dangerous. Maybe he'd been in jail.

STEVE

Oh, Jesus Christ, Kelly.

KELLY

What? They read pornography in prison, don't they? He could have picked up the habit, there. *(Pause)* I could never be in prison. Not because of the pornography. It's the toilets. They don't have seats. No toilet seats. Haven't you noticed that in prison movies? It's just a metal basin and no seat. And, of course, there's no privacy. No stall doors. No *stalls*. Just a seatless metal toilet right there in the cell like it's some kind of casual furniture.

STEVE

*(Purposefully vulgar; figures it will get her to change subject)*

I can take a shit anywhere. When I'm camping, I just dig a hole and pinch a loaf. Sometimes, I don't even dig a hole. Why bother? It's not like the animals dig a hole.

KELLY

*(Ignoring him; not taking the bait)*

I think I could love a man who'd been in prison. Not while he was *in* prison, but after he got out. A man who'd been locked away would appreciate me. A man who'd had to use a toilet without a seat would appreciate the sophistication and class that I'd bring to his life. *(A beat)* I should have flirted more.

*Lights out on KELLY and STEVE, as lights come up on DON, in the living room of the house he shares with Carole, wearing a pair of baggy boxers.*

DON

*(On the phone; halfway through his thought)*

...Because I was in the bathroom. And I needed both hands. *(Quick pause)* Because I *do*. One hand holds my dick and the other one cups my balls a little. *(Quick pause)* Because! I can't piss unless my left hand is cupping my balls. Seriously. *(Quick pause)* Yes, I've tried – not recently, but when I was younger. *(Indignant)* If I could piss without cupping my balls, don't you think I'd do it? Guys give you weird looks at the urinal, if you're cupping your balls. *(Quick pause)* Because they look. Guys *look*. *(Quick pause)* All guys. They just *do*. You're a guy. You look, too. I've seen you. And, personally, I think it's fucked up that you don't hold your dick at all, while you're pissing. The way you hold both your hands up, like you're surrendering to the urinal, is just fucked up. I don't see how you keep from getting piss all over the front of your pants. *(Quick pause)* Bullshit. It does not hang that low. You are so full of shit. *(Quick pause)* How did we get on this? *(Quick pause)* Oh, right, because Carole called from the airport, when I was just about to take a piss. And I didn't want to put her on speaker and lay the phone down on the back of the toilet. *(Quick pause; exasperated)* Because I need both hands! And because I didn't want her to think I was taking a piss, while she was talking to me. *(Quick pause)* Because I have manners! So, I just stood there in the bathroom, with my dick hanging out of my fly, kind of looking at myself in the mirror, while she told me about her luggage. *(Quick pause)* It got lost. And there were some guys with piercings that freaked her out. *(Quick pause)* Yeah, she'll be home, soon. And I've got to go in a little early, tomorrow, so... *(Quick pause)* No, not anymore. She was at the company where I did